

# News from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Air Quality Awareness Week, April 28 to May 2** *Statewide Outreach Efforts to Highlight Air Quality Awareness*

Concord, NH - The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES) joins EPA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in designating April 28 to May 2 as Air Quality Awareness Week to educate people about air pollution and what they can do to protect their health and improve air quality. The week marks the beginning of the summertime smog season and highlights the importance of being aware of local air quality conditions and of taking steps to protect your health, if necessary.

“During a typical summer, New Hampshire experiences a number of days when the air is unhealthy due to elevated levels of either ozone (better known as smog) or fine particle pollution,” said DES Commissioner Thomas Burack. “It is our responsibility to monitor outdoor air quality and make sure this information is readily available to the public.”

DES collects real-time (continuous) information on air quality conditions at over 20 air monitoring stations throughout the state operated by DES, UNH and the Appalachian Mountain Club. The information is used to forecast daily air quality conditions and is available all day every day at [www.airquality.nh.gov](http://www.airquality.nh.gov).

In a proclamation declaring April 28 to May 2 as Air Quality Awareness Week in the State of New Hampshire, Governor John Lynch encourages all New Hampshire residents and businesses to take actions to minimize air pollution and protect our clean air and environment. These actions include keeping cars and boat engines tuned-up, carpooling or using public transit, walking or biking, consolidating trips and errands, using environmentally safe paints and cleaning products, and conserving electricity.

Because the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) lowered the ozone standard this year, DES expects to see an increase in the number of unhealthy air quality days. However, this does not mean the air quality in New Hampshire is getting worse. On the contrary, air quality, on average, is getting better almost everywhere in the state. The new standard simply extends health protection to a greater population.

“Our air quality has been improving over the past few years,” Burack noted. “We can continue to keep our air clean and address climate change at the same time by taking simple steps like changing to ENERGY STAR light bulbs, reducing vehicle idling, and keeping tires properly inflated. Collectively, these actions will have a significant impact on saving energy and reducing air pollution.”

As part of Air Quality Awareness Week, DES and Breathe NH are sponsoring a Clean Air Hike up Pack Monadnock on April 30 for teachers and eighth graders from Jaffrey-Rindge Middle

School. The group will learn about how air quality affects their health and the environment, and will visit the DES air monitoring station at the summit and see the real time data being recorded.

For more information on air quality, or to arrange a visit to an air monitoring station, contact Kathy Brockett at (603) 271-6284.

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